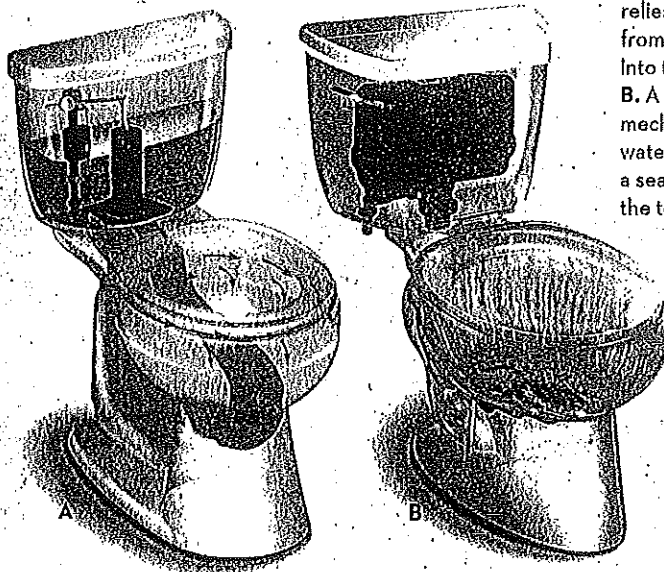


TOP PICKS FROM CONSUMER REPORTS



**BOWL BASICS**

A. A gravity-fed flushing mechanism relies on water moving from the tank down into the bowl.

B. A pressure-assisted mechanism uses water pressure from a sealed tank to flush the toilet.

making it a good choice for large families. But it does have a noisier flush of the two types, which can be a privacy issue, and it can also be expensive. Pressure-assisted toilets require at least 25 pounds per square inch (psi) of water pressure to work properly, so they're not a good option in homes with less-than-optimal pressure.

**Gravity-fed.** With this flushing mechanism, water drops from the tank into the bowl to move waste down the drain, requiring as little as 10 psi of water pressure. This type has a quieter flush, an advantage in close quarters. But lower-priced gravity-fed models

may not do a great job of removing waste or keeping the bowl clean.

Either type offers the water-saving option of dual-flush technology, with two buttons on the tank. Select one for a partial flush for liquid waste and the other for a full flush for solid.

**CHECK OUT THREE MORE FEATURES**

Before you decide on a particular toilet model, look under the lid—and behind the loo, as well.

**Flush mechanism.** Conventional rubber flappers in the tank are now usually replaced by a plastic flush tower, which theoretically should last longer than the old style.

**Flush valve.** Gravity toilets use a flush valve to discharge water from the tank into the bowl. Look for a model with a beefy 3- to 3 1/4-inch-wide valve, rather than a 2-inch one, to deliver more thrust. Ask to see the manufacturer's specs for the flush valve.

**Rough-in dimensions.** The clearance to the back wall needed to connect to the water line varies from model to model. Check the manufacturer's specs, and be sure to measure carefully if space is tight.

**\$avvy \$hopper**

Whether or not you're replacing a toilet, it pays to replace old rigid chrome-plated copper water supply lines with braided, flexible stainless steel. In addition to easing future repairs, those lines help minimize leaks. If you don't already have one, also install a water shutoff valve.

**Toilets**

Don't assume that you have to spend big bucks to get top performance in a toilet. Many winners from our latest tests, which involved flushing baby wipes, sponges, and plastic balls, cost between \$100 and \$300. The top overall scorers among single- and dual-flush models were priced about midway in the group. All models scored excellent on liquid-waste removal.

Our testers also looked at solid-waste removal, noise level, and how well the bowl was cleaned. More single-flush toilets passed our tests than dual-flush models.

Our favorites appear below:



**CONSUMER REPORTS' TOP-RATED SINGLE-FLUSH MODEL**

**GERBER AVALANCHE 21-818**  
\$330

This toilet offers both superb solid-waste removal and quiet flushing, a plus for bathrooms near sleeping areas. Bonus: It's a "comfort-height" model with extra ground clearance that makes getting on and off easier. [gerberonline.com](http://gerberonline.com)